

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 169

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 67

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 169—Relative to Sea Otter Awareness Week.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 1, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 169, Stone. Sea Otter Awareness Week.

This measure would proclaim and recognize the last full week of September 2022, September 18 to September 24, inclusive, as the 20th Anniversary of Sea Otter Awareness Week and would urge all Californians to appreciate the ecological, economic, and symbolic value of sea otters along California's coastal waters and to support protections for the sea otter and the coastal waters in which it lives.

WHEREAS, Sea otters play a critical role in the marine ecosystem as a keystone species and are an integral part of California's world-renowned kelp forests and its coastal economy; and

WHEREAS, Sea otters prey on kelp-eating sea urchins and other marine herbivores, promoting healthy kelp forests that, in turn, support countless fish and invertebrate species; and

WHEREAS, Sea otters perform similar ecosystem services in estuaries through a trophic cascade that helps restore eelgrass beds, another important nursery habitat for myriad species; and

WHEREAS, Without sea otters, these rich coastal ecosystems tend to collapse; and

WHEREAS, Sea otters serve as a sentinel species for coastal nearshore ecosystems by indicating when significant problems arise with the overall health of those systems; and

WHEREAS, The southern sea otter population provides millions of dollars in annual economic benefits to California through tourism, recreation-related jobs, and ecosystem services; and

WHEREAS, Despite years of research and conservation efforts, the sea otter remains an imperiled species along the California coast, and the population has neither grown appreciably in recent years nor expanded its range in more than two decades; and

WHEREAS, The California population of sea otters faces numerous risks to its health and long-term viability from land-based sources of disease and contamination, oil spills, shark bites, and other threats; and

WHEREAS, The fate of the sea otter is linked directly to the health of our coastal oceans; and

WHEREAS, The public should be educated about the need to protect California's sea otter population and the coastal waters in which they live, made aware of the value in having sea otters expand their range into historical areas where they lived before the fur trade hunted them to near extinction, and encouraged to appreciate the importance of restoring coastal habitats in the face of climate change and rising seas; and

WHEREAS, Defenders of Wildlife, Sea Otter Savvy, California State Parks, and other groups and government agencies have continued for 20 years to organize programs and events that highlight the importance and value of this remarkable species; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby proclaims and recognizes the last full week of September 2022, September 18 to September 24, inclusive, as the 20th Anniversary of Sea Otter Awareness Week and urges all Californians to appreciate the ecological, economic, and symbolic value of sea otters along California's coastal waters and to support protections for the sea otter and the coastal waters in which it lives; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.